

Message Text

SECRET

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1620

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 3757

NODIS CHEROKEE

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: GAYLARD ON MEETINGS

1. GRAHAM AND I SAW GAYLARD PRIOR TO OUR DEPARTURE FROM SALISBURY. WE DISCUSSED THE ALL PARTY MEETING OF PRINCIPALS, TELLING HIM THAT WE NOW UNDERSTOOD FROM GABELLAH THAT SITHOLE WAS PROBABLY WILLING TO COME TO AN UNPUBLICIZED MEETING (SEPTTEL). ON DATES, THE FIRST OPEN WEEKEND FOR EVERYONE WOULD BE JULY 29-30. GAYLARD WAS NOT BOTHERED BY THE LENGTH OF TIME INVOLVED, AGREEING THAT THERE WAS USEFUL PREPARATION WHICH COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE MEANTIME. HE RAISED A QUESTION OF SECURITY AT TULI WHICH IS NEAR AREAS WHERE ZANLA GUERRILLAS ARE OPERATING. GRAHAM SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER ASKING THE BOTSWANANS FOR PERMISSION TO BRING IN SOME MILITARY POLICEMEN TO AUGMENT THE PLATOON OR SO THEY WOULD PROBABLY PROVIDE.

2. GAYLARD ASKED HOW WE SAW OUR ROLE IN THE CONFERRNCE AND AT WHAT LEVEL WE EXPECTED TO BE REPRESENTED. HE SAID HE HOPED THAT WE WOULD AGREE TO MEETINGS AMONG THE SIX PRINCIPALS WITHOUT BEING PRESENT OURSELVES.

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HE ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT HE AND SMITH HOPED THE UK-US REPRESENTATION COULD BE AT THE GRAHAM-LOW LEVEL. WE REPLIED THAT WE SAW THE CONFERENCE UNDER UK-US AUSPICES. MUGABE OBJECTED TO OUR "CHAIRING" IT SINCE HE SAW THE PF NEGOTIATING WITH BRITAIN. WE HAD NO OBJECTION TO PRIVATE MEETINGS AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS AT DIFFERENT TIMES--AS A

MATTER OF FACT WE THOUGHT THEM A GOOD IDEA--BUT WE WOULD HAVE TO SEE HOW THAT WENT AT THE TIME. AS TO LEVEL WE NOTED THAT NKOMO PROBABLY EXPECTS A HIGHER LEVEL THAN GRAHAM-LOW THOUGH WE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WOULD MEAN MINISTERIAL LEVEL (AT LEAST ON THE BRITISH SIDE) AND THIS WOULD MAKE SECRECY VERY DIFFICULT.

3. GAYLARD EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE CONFERENCE ITSELF. HE NOTED THAT GRAHAM HAD SAID THAT AN ARTICLE A FEW DAYS AGO QUOTING MUGABE'S VIEWS WAS PROBABLY AN ACCURATE EXPRESSION OF HIS THINKING. IN IT MUGABE HAD SAID THAT HE WOULD ONLY NEGOTIATE WITH THE BRITISH NOT THE OTHER PARTIES, SMITH AND THE OTHER LEADERS OF THE REGIME MUST BE TRIED AND HE SUPPORTED A ONE PARTY STATE. THIS WAS NOT ENCOURAGING. GAYLARD SAID THAT AT GENEVA HE HAD SEEN MUGABE DOMINATE NKOMO'S POSITIONS TIME AFTER TIME. WE REPLIED THAT THAT WAS ALMOST TWO YEARS AGO BEFORE NKOMO HAD AN ARMY OF HIS OWN. HE WAS NOW MUCH STRONGER AND MORE CONFIDENT. THE FIRST POINT WAS NOT SERIOUS. MUGABE HAD ACCEPTED BRITISH CHAIRMANSHIP AT GENEVA; THE SECOND POINT WAS A BARGAINING POSITION ON WHICH NKOMO CLEARLY DISAGREED AND THE THIRD AN OBJECTIVE. ONE PARTY STATES OF THE AFRICAN KIND WERE NOT UNCOMMON--ZAMBIA, TANZANIA, MALAWI--THEY WERE
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INCLUSIVE AND NOT MONOLITHIC. WE DID NOT THINK THAT MUGABE COULD DOMINATE A CONFERENCE.

4. GAYLARD THEN BROUGHT UP THE NKOMO MEETING. HE SAID THAT THOUGH HE HAD NOT DISCUSSED IT WITH SMITH YET, THE NEW PROPOSAL FOR A MEETING IN EUROPE WITH GARBA PRESENT COMPLETELY DISTORTED THE ORIGINAL IDEA OF A PRIVATE MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO WHICH THE UK-US AND ZAMBIA WOULD ARRANGE BUT NOT BE PRESENT. HE DOUBTED VERY MUCH THAT SMITH WOULD BUY IT. HE WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER NKOMO WANTED A PRIVATE MEETING. HE REJECTED ALL EMISSARIES--ROWLAND, GRAHAM-LOW, CHINAMANO, HIMSELF. SMITH KNEW NKOMO WELL AND WANTED TO MEET FACE TO FACE TO SEE WHETHER THERE WAS A BASIS FOR A SUCCESSFUL ALL PARTY MEETING. NEITHER MAN WOULD ENTRUST HIS THOUGHTS TO ANYONE ELSE. WHILE RECOGNIZING THE USEFULNESS OF SUCH A MEETING, WE TRIED TO IMPRESS ON GAYLARD ITS DANGERS. IF IT FAILED IT WOULD LEAVE BOTH SIDES VERY EXPOSED--PARTICULARLY NKOMO. EVEN IF IT SUCCEEDED, PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE COULD RUIN IT. AGAIN HE RAISED

HIS OBJECTION TO MUGABE. I SAID I THOUGHT IT
IMPORTANT THAT NKOMO PLAY THIS HIS WAY. PERSONALLY,
I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO UNDERESTIMATE
THE IMPORTANCE HE GIVES TO MAINTAINING SUPPORT OF

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PRETORIA 3757

NODIS CHEROKEE

FROM LOW

ZANU--BEYOND ZANU SITHOLE. THERE WERE A NUMBER
OF ZANU'S--MUGABE, TONGOGARA, HAMADZIRIPI, ETC.
HE WOULD PROBABLY RATHER HAVE THEM INVOLVED--
AND CONTROLLED--THAN OUTSIDE. GAYLARD'S ANSWER
WAS TO SAY THAT THE PROBLEM WAS SHONA INVOLVEMENT.
THIS COULD BE PROVIDED BY MUGABE AND SITHOLE. I
SAID I THOUGHT NKOMO PROBABLY WOULD INSIST ON
ZANLA INVOLVEMENT AND THIS VIEW SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED.

5. GAYLARD SAID HE WOULD BE INTOUCH WITH US ON
OUR RETURN THURSDAY AND PERHAPS WITH JOHNNY OVER THE
WEEKEND--I SAID I WAS PLANNING TO SPEND
SAT./SUN. IN LUSAKA.

6. COMMENT: WE ARE BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE.
THERE IS A LEGITIMATE NEED FOR A MEETING BETWEEN SMITH
AND NKOMO. I DON'T SEE HOW WE CAN GO AHEAD NOW WITHOUT
KAUNDA AND I DOUBT NKOMO WOULD DO IT WITHOUT SOME COVER.
THERE IS LITTLE WE CAN DO AT THIS STAGE. A FURTHER
ATTEMPT MAY BE MADE LATER. IN THE MEANTIME THE
DISCUSSION UNDERLIES THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING WITH
MACHEL, KAUNDA AND SMITH TO ENCOURAGE MAXIMUM
FLEXIBILITY FROM ALL PARTIES AT A CONFERENCE.

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